

Serial No. 09/827,031
Docket No. 40655.1000

Amendments To Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-20 (cancelled).

21. (currently amended) A computer-implemented method for facilitating an auction comprising:

storing, at a computer, a consumer defined purchase ~~rule~~ rule rules for an item;

retrieving, from said computer, a subset of consumer information, wherein said subset comprises consumer information having a similar said consumer defined purchase ~~rule~~ rule rules;

providing, via said computer, said subset to a vendor offering said item;

accepting, at said computer, a bid from said vendor to provide said item to a consumer associated with said subset based on an ability of said vendor to accommodate within a consumer defined threshold said consumer defined purchase ~~rule~~ rule rules of said subset;

verifying, at said computer, that said bid is in accordance with said consumer defined purchase ~~rule~~ rule rules; and,

confirming, at said computer, that said bid is an optimum bid.

22. (previously presented) The method of claim 21, further comprising notifying, via said computer, said consumer of said optimum bid.

23. (previously presented) The method of claim 21, wherein said confirming step comprises determining if said bid provides optimum savings for said consumer.

24. (previously presented) The method of claim 21, wherein said verifying step comprises evaluating said bid based on a proposed price and a proposed provision of said item.

25. (currently amended) The method of claim 21, wherein said storing step comprises storing in a database a deviation to said consumer defined purchase ~~rule~~ rule.

26. (currently amended) The method of claim 21, wherein said storing step comprises storing in a database a restriction upon a deviation from said consumer defined purchase ~~rule~~ rule.

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27. (previously presented) The method of claim 21, wherein said item comprises at least one of an airline reservation, automobile rental reservation, and hotel reservation.

28. (currently amended) The method of claim 21, wherein said retrieving step comprises scanning a database to determine rows of said consumer information with a similar said consumer defined purchase rule rules, placing said rows of a similar said consumer defined purchase rule rules into said subset, wherein said database comprises a plurality of rows.

29. (previously presented) The method of claim 28, wherein an individual row of said rows is placed into a plurality of subsets.

30. (currently amended) The method of claim 28, wherein said rows are similar when said consumer defined purchase rule rules differ differs by less than a predetermined criteria.

31. (previously presented) The method of claim 21, wherein said item comprises at least one of a good and service.

32. (currently amended) A machine-readable medium having stored thereon a plurality of instructions, said plurality of instructions when executed by a processor, cause said processor to perform a method comprising the steps of:

storing in a database a consumer defined purchase rule rules for an item;

retrieving a subset of consumer information, wherein said subset comprises consumer information having a similar said consumer defined purchase rule rules;

providing said subset to a vendor offering said item;

accepting a bid from said vendor to provide said item to a consumer associated with said subset based on an ability of said vendor to accommodate within a consumer defined threshold said consumer defined purchase rule rules of said subset;

verifying that said bid is in accordance with said consumer defined purchase rule rules; and,

confirming that said bid is an optimum bid.

33. (new) The method of claim 21, wherein said consumer defined purchase rules include at least two of price, scheduling preferences, departure airport, destination airport, departure date, departure time, arrival date, arrival time, seating preferences, and special accommodations.

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